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## Iowa and the First Nomination of Abraham Lincoln

F. I. Herriott

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## IOWA AND THE FIRST NOMINATION OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

BY F. I. HERRIOTT,

*Professor of Economics, Political and Social Science,  
Drake University.*

## THE PRELIMINARIES OF 1859.

The mutinous disturbances in the ranks of the Democratic party incident to and following the Lincoln-Douglas debates naturally increased public interest in the presidential succession. There was exhibited in the country at large, alike in the Democratic and Republican papers, signs of a growing feeling that the dissensions within the "Administration" reflected irreconcilable differences respecting Slavery—differences so serious that they would inevitably drive either the northern or the southern wing of the Democratic party into irretrievable insurrection or opposition. Coincident with this disintegration of the party in power there were obvious drifts indicating a concentration and coalescence of the sundry groups of the Opposition. Abolitionists and Americans, German-Americans and Whigs, contradictory and divergent though their antecedents, affiliations and purposes were, saw or were beginning to feel, that the aggressions and arrogance of the Slavocrats within and without Congress made Slavery—its extension or extinction—the paramount fact in public debate. They were becoming conscious of the fact that the principles of the Republican party afforded them a fairly satisfactory common ground for concentration and concert in opposition.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The headings of editorials in the press of Iowa and the titles of articles reprinted from eastern and southern papers during the last quarter of 1858 and the first half of 1859 afford ample and interesting evidence justifying the assertions above. The columns of *The Daily Hawk-Eye* of Burlington suffice for illustration:

The dissensions in the Democratic party are dwelt upon in an extended article reprinted Nov. 5, 1858, from the *Cincinnati Gazette*, entitled "Democracy going to Pieces—South Indignant at their Northern Allies and Repudiating their Fellowship"; Nov. 18, by two and a quarter columns devoted to a reprint of portions of a speech by Senator Hammond of South Carolina; Nov. 27, in an article—"The Northern Democracy—Where is it and What will it be?" taken from the *Cincinnati Gazette* and in a long extract from the speech of Jefferson Davis at Jackson, Mississippi; Dec. 20, in a reprint from the *Gazette* on "Senator Douglas and his Political Patchwork"; Dec. 31, in a bitter extract from *The Mississippiian*

### 1. *Important Conditions Determining Expressions.*

The signs in Iowa in 1859 of interest in the Presidential succession and particularly the selection of the Republican candidate while definite were not numerous. Readers of the compact and rapid narratives of the biographers of Chase, Lincoln and Seward, and of our national historians that relate the chief developments of the pre-convention campaign among the Republicans will suffer some surprise at the dearth of expression. Editors made note of the subject infrequently. There is but little evidence of either individual or local preferences as regards candidates. Expressions relative to the principles and policies were more explicit and insistent; but there was no hue and cry. Two important facts must be appreciated in order to realize the significance of the meagre evidence of public interest in Iowa in the Republican preliminaries of 1860.

First, newspapers were not numerous on this side of the Mississippi. Their publication was not only an expensive and laborious business, but their maintenance was dependent, in no small measure, upon the favor of the public authorities, the compensation for publishing the "Delinquent Tax List"

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of Jackson, Miss., anent Douglas' visit to the South; Jan. 10, 1859, in Correspondence, entitled "Virginia Politics and Republican Proclivities" taken from the *N. Y. Times*; Jan. 20, in a reprint of Correspondence of the *N. Y. Post*, entitled "What is Douglas going to Do?" anent the differences with his colleagues in the Senate; March 1, in a dispatch headed "New Political Division," etc., commenting on a recent speech of Douglas at Washington; and March 2, in an editorial with the title "A House Divided Against Itself," that begins—"There is not a single question of importance upon which the Democratic party is united—Not one. It is divided upon the tariff, the government of the territories, and at loggerheads on the nigger question generally. . . . The Democratic party is now totally 'demoralized,' to use the language of the *N. Y. Herald*. . . ." The radiation from Lincoln's speech at Springfield in June is here very apparent.

The movements indicating coalescence of the opposition, the advantages thereof, and the necessity therefor are likewise noted and discoursed upon from time to time; Nov. 11, 1858, the editorials of the *N. Y. Tribune* and the Springfield (Mass.) *Republican* commenting upon the "Triumph of Mr. Douglas" in Illinois were reprinted at length; Nov. 22, Greeley's plan for "uniting the opposition" by doing away with conventions is given; May 12, an editorial entitled "Union of the Opposition" cites from the *N. Y. Commercial Advertiser*; May 23, Greeley's "Appeal to Conservatives," is reprinted; and June 8, portions of Greeley's speech "On the Presidential Prospects" at Ossawatimie, Kan. (May 18), containing his advice to work for a coalition is reproduced. During the remainder of the year most of the leading editorials of *The Tribune* urging a union of the opposition are reproduced in the columns of *The Hawk-Eye*—usually, however, without comment.

The writer is under extraordinary obligations to the courtesy and consideration of Mr. W. W. Baldwin, and of Mr. J. L. Waite, editor of *The Hawk-Eye* for the foregoing and subsequent citations from the same journal.

being their major source of income. Typesetting was done by hand. Mergenthalers and linotype machines, penny dreadfuls and "Extras" daily were inconceivable. There were but four telegraph stations in the State<sup>1</sup> and only five cities (Dubuque, Davenport, Muscatine, Burlington and Keokuk) could boast of daily papers published continuously throughout the year.<sup>2</sup> Editors, consequently, discussed men and measures under a stress of multifarious duties. They had to gather news, solicit advertisements and subscriptions, beseech and enforce collections, often do "the devil's work," while they were playing and watching the game of politics. If under such circumstances expressions of serious and well-ordered opinions by editors were infrequent; if the manifestations of interest in the issues of the approaching Presidential struggle were meagre and more or less indefinite the fact by no means signifies an absence of alert, intelligent interest among editors and their patrons.

The second basic fact to be reckoned with was the circulation of *The New York Tribune* in Iowa. That paper was by far the greatest purveyor of news in the State. No local paper possessed anything like its range and force of influence. Its power was exerted mainly perhaps outside rather than within the cities. In many, if not in most rural communities the postmasters handled more *Weekly Tribunes* than all other foreign papers combined. The homes of regular subscribers were much patronized by neighbors not subscribers. Men of means frequently made gratuitous subscriptions as gifts to nearby friends or neighbors. To the tillers of the soil its columns headed "Important to the Farmers" contained nearly all the law and the prophets. Fields were plowed; corn, wheat and trees were planted; stock housed and fed and crops garnered according to the directions of "Uncle Horace." In the animated discussions at house and barn raisings, at threshings, and husking bees, at barbecues, singing and spelling schools, at "shoots" and rallies, his columns were constantly appealed to for facts and arguments as well as for news. Pioneers, in

<sup>1</sup>*N. Y. Tribune* (s. w.) Oct. 14, 1859: A Chicago dispatch giving the returns from the recent election in Iowa and explaining the delay thereof.

<sup>2</sup>The citizens of Des Moines enjoyed a Daily during the sessions of the General Assembly, viz.: once in two years.

their reminiscences of *ante bellum* days are not always quite certain whether Greeley's *Tribune* or the Bible had precedence in the family circle.<sup>1</sup> In the forepart of 1859 the reported number of subscribers in Iowa was stated to be 7,523<sup>2</sup> and a year later the number had increased to 11,000.<sup>3</sup> Its circle of readers at the later date doubtless embraced 100,000 persons from whom its influence constantly radiated. The actual circulation of local dailies or weeklies probably in no case exceeded a third of Greeley's weekly.<sup>4</sup>

In demonstrating the development of party opinion in Iowa respecting the best selection for the Republican party's candidate for the Presidency in 1860, it is necessary to indicate the antecedent attitude of the party spokesmen towards the principles that were to make up the party platform. The drift of sentiment as to the principles of administrative policy in the nature of the case largely decides the course of party leaders in the selection of the standard bearer. The candidate is to be the executive of the principles adopted. Consequently he must be a man representative of and in sympathy with those principles. Hence, in what succeeds, considerable attention will be given to the trend of discussion of the program for the Republican party in 1860.

In tracing the growth of opinion in the party press one frequently suffers from perplexity. It is not easy always to determine the significance of news items, editorial expressions and particularly of the reprint of articles from eastern and southern contemporaries. Editors, like most mortals, labor under personal and partizan bias. Local associations and prejudices arising in business, church, politics and social con-

<sup>1</sup>The writer's authority for the statements above consists chiefly of correspondence and interviews with pioneers—notably with Professor Jesse Macy of Iowa College at Grinnell and with the late George C. Duffield of Keosauqua.

<sup>2</sup>*N. Y. Tribune* (s. w.) April 26, 1859.

<sup>3</sup>*Iowa State Register* (Des Moines) April 18, 1860.

<sup>4</sup>Noting the circulation of the *N. Y. Tribune* in March, 1859, *The Hawk-Eye* observed: "There is no paper printed in the State of Iowa that has half the circulation of *The Tribune* within the State." (April 29, 1859.)

Mr. Will Porter, editor of the Democratic paper, *The Journal*, published at Des Moines between 1856 and 1860, informs the writer that in 1859 by extra efforts and special inducements he secured for his paper during the political campaign a circulation of approximately 4,000, which was the high watermark up to that time. That circulation was extraordinary, however, lasting only during the campaign. The circulation of his Republican rival, *The Citizen*, as he recalls, ranged from 1,500 to 2,000. Interview with Mr. Porter, Des Moines, Nov. 17, 1908.

nections, in the main, predispose and fix opinions and control actions. Items are "run" and articles are reprinted usually as matters of news simply as indices to the direction of currents of popular interest. Sometimes, however, they are inserted and "headed" with set purpose and design to influence public opinion *pro* or *con*, as regards approaching party decisions on matters of policy or procedure. Moreover, editors frequently express opinions in their editorial columns that indicate what they would prefer to have and hope to see realized, rather than what they as a matter of fact really expect will come to pass. In the narrative which follows the editors cited for the most part express their views in their own words.

## 2. *First Expressions Respecting Party Principles and Candidates.*

The first expression in the press of Iowa in 1859 respecting the campaign in 1860 was elicited by one of the suggestions of the *New York Tribune*. In the second week of December<sup>1</sup> Greeley had proposed that the Republicans should nominate a candidate for Vice-President and the non-Republican opposition should nominate the head of the ticket—the only condition being that the nominee should definitely favor the restriction of slavery to the States then occupied. The *Louisville Journal* demurred and submitted a counter proposal—both wings of the opposition should assemble in Washington in separate conventions in the summer of 1860, the non-Republican opposition to engage to present a candidate for the Presidency on whom all could unite and the Republicans to do the same with respect to the second place—one whom all could "support with zeal and propriety." In outlining these proposals to his readers Mr. Hildreth observed (January 13): "It is plain that the time has not yet come for the different wings of the opposition to 'compare notes' with a view to selecting a Presidential candidate. But ingenious men will exercise their talents in this line and their efforts may be of some use in affording glimpses of the state of public senti-

<sup>1</sup>*N. Y. Tribune* (s. w.), Dec. 10, 1858.

ment." Concluding he makes the interesting assertion: "It has been assumed that the extreme abolition sentiment would bring into nomination Senator Seward for President and F. P. Stanton, the Kansas ex-Secretary and ex-Acting Governor, for Vice-President; but the declaration of Mr. Stanton, that Mr. Seward's extraordinary platform [Rochester speech] can find no endorsement from the people, condemns that theory."<sup>1</sup> At that time Mr. Hildreth, "down east" Yankee though he was, did not look with favor upon the nomination of the author of the Rochester speech.

A week later under "Notes From Washington" Mr. Hildreth reprints portions of the correspondence of the Cincinnati *Enquirer* (an Administration paper), stating that "Senator Seward and Governor Chase are the most talked of as the candidates for the Presidency among the Republicans. But F. P. Blair, Sr., is ardent for Colonel Fremont, who, with Frank Blair of Missouri for the Vice-Presidency the correspondent is inclined to think will prevail in the convention."<sup>2</sup> And in his next issue he notes that "a quarrel is going on among the Republican members there (Washington); a portion desire to take up the Douglas popular sovereignty doctrine, abandoning direct opposition to slavers, and invite the Douglas men, and southern as well as northern Americans to join them. Eli Thayer, of Mass., is one of the prominent advocates of this plan."<sup>3</sup> Two weeks later he notes that a political club has been formed to promote the candidacy of John M. Botts of Virginia for the Opposition's choice for standard bearer in 1860.<sup>4</sup> About the same time the editors of *The Montezuma Weekly Republican* make note of the assertion of the *New York Times* that "a new Republican movement" was under way that "may command attention. It is to make Colonel Fremont again the candidate, putting upon the ticket some live southern or southwestern man, like Blair of Missouri, who has ability, political courage and the advantage of living in a Slave State."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*St. Charles Intelligencer*, Jan. 13, 1859,—Editorial "Presidential Discussions."

<sup>2</sup>*Ib.* Jan. 20, 1859. <sup>3</sup>*Ib.* Jan. 27, 1859. <sup>4</sup>*Ib.* Feb. 10, 1859.

<sup>5</sup>*The Montezuma Weekly Republican*, Jan. 20, 1859.

The first extended, explicit and serious expression relative to the approaching Presidential contest came from Burlington from the pen of Mr. Clark Dunham, editor of *The Daily Hawk-Eye*. On March 5, discussing "The Issue of 1860," he observed that no intelligent man could "fail to see" that "a very important crisis" was approaching.

There is but one question at issue . . . and that is the Negro question. To this question there can be but two parties.

On one side we have the party of Slavery, headed by vigilant, active, determined and desperate leaders, whose voice has heretofore ruled Congress. . . . If they fail in this [the extension of Slavery] they will do their utmost to bring about a dissolution of the Union and erect the Slave States into a Southern Republic.

On the other side the Republican party holds that Slavery is a creature of law, freedom being the normal condition of all men—that the Dred Scott decision is in violation of the constitution, policy of our government and spirit of our institutions, extra-judicial and therefore not binding—that Slavery has no legal existence outside of Slave States. That neither the Congress of the United States nor the people of the territories, deriving their powers from Congress, can enact Slave laws for the territories . . .

This is the issue before the country, and it is such an issue, so clearly defined, that there can be no third party.

Three facts stand out in Mr. Dunham's editorial that are observable in much of the discussion of the period. First, Slavery was believed to be foremost in the public mind as to which there could be (decry the necessity as many did, never so much) but two opinions and but two courses to follow. It was the iron wedge on which all other matters split. Second, the terrible earnestness of the Slavocrats and their willingness to proceed to desperate measures to accomplish their program is clearly apprehended. Third, there appears an obvious but little appreciated contradiction in the attitude of the Republicans towards the question of Slavery—Slavery was declared to be a creature of law, but the application of the doctrine under the Dred Scott decision is pronounced extra-judicial and subversive of the constitution.

During March the King-makers became active and vocal. In the latter part of the month the Republican press of St. Louis announced Edward Bates as a candidate for the Presi-



deney, asking his nomination by the National Republican Convention. Formal measures were taken to place him before the public and to promote his candidacy. The majority of the papers in Iowa, if they recognized it at all, merely made note of the announcement as a matter of news without comment, or with a collateral quotation of some favorable opinion of those favoring his candidacy.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Dunham, however, expressed in blunt, brief fashion an objection to the announcement—but gave no hint as to his real attitude towards Mr. Bates. Commenting upon the effort of the *Evening News* of St. Louis at “president making” he bluntly declared: “This is premature. It is too early yet to discuss the merits of candidates. And the success of Mr. Bates and other aspirants depends a good deal on their being kept out of the fight for some time to come.”<sup>2</sup> Two days later he reprints the remarks of Dr. Bailey of the *National Era* commending Salmon P. Chase as a suitable standard bearer for the Republicans in 1860.<sup>3</sup> A month later Mr. Hildreth referring to the Bates letter said: “His prospects for a nomination for the Presidency by the Republicans are not inferior to those of any statesman named. If nominated, he would most assuredly be elected.”<sup>4</sup>

The most interesting editorial item discoverable in March was the following from Mr. Mahin’s columns: “The Chicago *Democrat* strongly urges the nomination of Abe Lincoln for the Vice-Presidency by the Republican party, and thinks the ticket had better be headed by some southern man. It says: ‘We think it would aid us materially in establishing a national position, if we could run some southern man for the Presidency with Mr. Lincoln for Vice-President.’ *The Rockford Republican* takes the same ground.”<sup>5</sup>

In March Mr. John Teesdale, editor of *The Weekly Citizen* published at the State capital, visited Ohio in which State he had been influential as an editor and as a politician for twenty

<sup>1</sup>See *The Gate City*, April 5, 1859. See also *The Davenport Weekly Gazette*, April 28, 1859; *The Keosauqua Weekly Republican*, April 9, 1859.

<sup>2</sup>*The Daily Hawk-Eye*, April 14, 1859.

<sup>3</sup>*Ib.* April 16, 1859.

<sup>4</sup>*St. Charles Intelligencer*, May 12, 1859.

<sup>5</sup>*The Muscatine Daily Journal*, March 29, 1859.

years (1837-1856), being between 1844-46 Private Secretary to Governor Bartley. While renewing old acquaintances, politics and the prospects of candidates for the Presidency were subjects of earnest inquiry. He sought to learn the drift and force of the currents there and Ohioans besought information as to the probable course of party preferences in Iowa. On his return to Des Moines he set forth (April 13) his views at some length under the caption, "Iowa and the Presidency." Mr. Teesdale at the time was State Printer and his paper was in a sense an official organ. At least his views were likely to differ but little from what he would regard as the prevalent opinion among the dominant men of his party as represented by the men holding official positions. His editorial is quoted at length.

Frequently during our absence from the State we were interrogated as to the Presidential preferences of Iowa. We uniformly answered that Iowa would be for the Republican nominee, beyond the shadow of a doubt; but we doubted whether any man could speak authoritatively, just now, as to her Presidential preferences. The press,—which usually affords unmistakable evidence of the setting of the public current—has thus far remained silent upon the question of the next Presidency. The silence is not the result of indifference, but of a purpose that pervades, as we believe, the Republican ranks of nearly every State, viz.: a purpose to sink all personal predilections in an effort to secure a candidate whose success will be beyond question. There is a deep and strong conviction that the next President will be a Republican. This conviction gains strength daily, with the increasing evidence of the disorganization and demoralization of the sham Democracy. Believing that there will be no difficulty in electing the Republican nominee, if he truly represents the Republican sentiment of the country, there is an all-pervading conviction that the nominee should be a man who is fully and fairly identified with the Republican organization; a man who has been tried; a man who has a national reputation, and who can be trusted in all possible contingencies, as an exponent of the friends of Freedom. If Iowa had the making of the President, she would, we believe, confer that honor upon William H. Seward, the peerless statesman, the incorruptible patriot. But, if in deference to the opinions and preferences of her sister States it becomes necessary to name another as the Republican standard bearer she will cheerfully support John McLean, Salmon P. Chase, Winfield Scott, John C. Fremont, John P. Hale, or any other among

the illustrious men who have attested their devotion to Republican principles. If a Pennsylvania candidate is needed, there is no man in whose behalf she would so cordially attest her devotion, as Galusha A. Grow. John Bell, and John J. Crittenden have a host of friends in Iowa, but before a union could be effected in behalf of either it would be necessary to know that they fully endorse the platform adopted by the last National Republican Convention.

When the proper time comes, Iowa will speak out, so that her personal preferences shall be understood; but her personal preferences will never be suffered to disturb the harmony of the Republican organization. She will be ready to fall into line for the nominee and give him her support with an earnestness that will not permit her to be regarded as debatable ground. At present there seems to be no urgent necessity for agitating the Presidential question. We have a State canvass on our hands which we mean to dispose of before devoting much space to the next Presidency. National questions will exert, as they should, a powerful influence in the coming State election. But Presidential preferences will have very little to do with the result.

There is much in the foregoing that anticipates subsequent discussion. First, like most politicians whose experience has been sufficient to teach prudence, Mr. Teesdale did not believe there was much benefit in crossing streams before coming to the bridges. Second, while he had decided personal preferences in respect of the candidate, he would not stand stoutly for his choice and none other regardless of contrary considerations affecting the party's success at the polls. Third, he was confident there was but little of the "rule or ruin" sentiment among the Republicans of the State with respect to the party's candidate. Fourth, an alliance with the non-Republican Opposition would be sanctioned if the coalition was arranged upon the basis of an explicit concurrence in and reaffirmation of the principles of the Philadelphia platform. Fifth, the doubtful States should determine the choice, if thereby victory would be rendered more probable.

Two days later (April 15) there came a vigorous pronouncement from Muscatine. Shortly before, the Opposition party in Tennessee had held a convention, adopted a State platform, and had put forward John Bell as a candidate for the Presidency in 1860, believing him to be one about whom all could rally in a common struggle to dislodge the Administra-

tion. Mr. Mahin viewed the platform as the draft of a protocol for a coalition, reprinted it entire and proceeded to subject its proposals to some sharp criticism under the caption "The Opposition in Tennessee—Can We Coalesce in 1860." It was a "sandwich platform" in his judgment and he gave it short shrift. The first resolution declaring the Union "the surest guaranty of the rights and interests of all sections" he branded as the "old clap-trap, dingy generality" which had become "familiar of late years as the heading of any special rascality which its author wished to cover up." The second proclaiming "our constitutional rights" as regards Slavery and thereupon insisting that the people in new territories "when they come to form a constitution and establish a State government shall decide the question of Slavery" he declared a palpable inconsistency, being merely "the Lecompton Slave Trading Democracy dressed up in Sunday clothes." The section advocating "a tariff adequate to the expenses of economical administration . . . with specific duties where applicable, discriminating in favor of American industries" he said pointedly "meant anything or nothing according to the section where read." The plank calling for a "reasonable extension of the period of probation now prescribed for the naturalization of foreigners and a more rigid enforcement of the law upon the subject" he asserted was alone "sufficient to ensure [the] prompt and contemptuous rejection [of the entire platform] by every Republican." Mr. Mahin concludes his editorial by announcing that the motto of the northern Republicans is—"No coalition and no compromises."<sup>1</sup> A week later in tendering "A Word of Advice" to Republicans relative to amalgamation with "less radical elements" he said "the Slavery question is now the only *real* issue between the two great parties of the country and it therefore behooves us to maintain a bold and decided stand upon it."<sup>2</sup>

Three facts are noteworthy in Mr. Mahin's expressions. First, the effect of Lincoln's Freeport questions that made juggling with "popular sovereignty" impossible, is realized. Second, he strikes at the proposed extension of the probation-

<sup>1</sup>*The Muscatine Daily Journal*, April 15, 1859.

<sup>2</sup>*Ib.* April 21, 1859.

ary period in naturalization with vigor, voicing a protest that a few weeks later became almost universal throughout the northwest States when the Massachusetts Amendment set the Germans on fire. Third, the cardinal fact in discussion, the fact that could not be ignored or minimized, was Slavery.

The announcement of Mr. Bates as a candidate for the Republican nomination for the Presidency resulted forthwith in sundry efforts to draw from him by way of interviews, letters and speeches, expressions of his views on the issues in debate. Of several statements made by him the most serious was an extended letter to a committee of Whigs of New York City. His position upon the subject of Slavery was virtually *laissez faire, laissez passer*, let it alone and enforce the law and time will work the cure of the iniquities of the institution. His statement, although conceded to be "able and interesting," did not strike Mr. Howell of Keokuk favorably, a portion of his editorial comment being:

The nigger question he spends but few words upon. He would ignore it altogether, and get rid of it by leaving it alone. But Mr. Bates should have sense enough to see that it is so linked in with the rights of man at large, and the interest and ambitions of men in particular, that it has made *itself* conspicuous and cannot be got rid of by not looking at it or in any other way but some sort of a definite and satisfactory settlement. The spirit of Mr. Bates' letter is patriotic and sound but it does not show him to be such a plain-dealing and thorough-going statesman as the times demand. It is futile to mention his name again in connection with the Presidency.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. J. B. Dorr's reference to the announcement from St. Louis indicated clearly the attitude that the Democrats would maintain towards the candidacy of Mr. Bates. He merely noted: "Many of the Know-Nothing organs have already hoisted his name at the head of their columns and some of the Republican papers have done the same."<sup>2</sup>

The attitude of many, if not a majority, of experienced editors and party leaders towards political candidacies is exhibited in clear fashion in the editorial expressions of two influential editors in central eastern Iowa in the latter days

<sup>1</sup>The Gate City, April 21, 1859.

<sup>2</sup>The Express and Herald (Dubuque), April 23, 1859.

of April respecting two prominent Ohioans, Salmon P. Chase and Benjamin F. Wade. Personal preferences and party plans and success may coincide; but in case they do not, the exigencies of a political contest must needs prevail over the personal inclination of the admirers and friends of this or that aspirant or candidate. Mr. Add. H. Sanders, editor of *The Davenport Gazette*, on April 28, declared himself as follows:

We are glad to see that the name of Gov. Chase *is* becoming intimately associated in public discussion with the next nomination of the Republican party for the Presidency. No man has been mentioned in connection with this high position, as the candidate of a party in 1860, who combines in himself higher qualifications for the position, and a more consistent political or pure personal history than Governor Chase . . .

In thus speaking of Gov. Chase we have merely availed ourselves of an opportunity of expressing opinion of a man who in every position has sustained the confidence of his friends and his own self-respect. We advocate as a Republican paper the claims of no man for the nomination of the next Republican National Convention. We have, indeed, heard no name suggested for this nomination as a Republican candidate for the Presidency in 1860, which we would not cheerfully support and with that zeal which ever marks our course when sustaining good men backed by good principles. We believe, however, that no Republican combines greater elements of popularity with less objectionable qualities, than Gov. Chase—in other words, that no Republican would make a better race. . . .

Two days later Mr. S. S. Daniels, editor of *The Tipton Advertiser*, discussing "The Next Presidential Contest" said among other things:

We do not intend to discuss the merits of the different men for the office of President and are willing to vote for any of the men who have been named for that office. At the same time we would like much to see Hon. Frank Wade, U. S. Senator from Ohio, brought out as our next candidate. Mr. Wade occupies a very favorable position before the American people; he has never taken *ultra* grounds, while he has ever stood up for the right, and has done it in such a way that none have ever dared to oppose him as they have many others. Frank Wade is *excepted* when wholesale charges are made against the Republicans; he has made many speeches but they were all good; he has said nor done nothing which will injure him in any way.

It is not uninteresting to note that Messrs. Sanders and Daniels were both, prior to coming to Iowa, residents of Ohio, hence doubtless their predilection for the distinguished sons of that State.

3. *The Reception of Greeley's Suggestion for a Coalition of the Opposition.*

Meantime there had been a pronouncement, as it were, *ex cathedra*. For the greater part of two years the *New York Tribune* had been urging, with a view to the contest in 1860, the elements of the Opposition to pursue a policy of conciliation and concession relative to each other, to combine on matters of common agreement and ignore the collateral issues peculiar to groups or sections, however important they might seem to them severally, but which were minor and subsidiary as respects the central and predominant issue and if urged would make for dissension and defeat. The paramount demand of the Opposition, north and south, was the maintenance of Freedom in the non-slave States and the restriction of Slavery within its original or then established limits. Victory in the approaching contest depended upon the dislodgment of Slavocracy from seats of authority and this end could not be achieved except by concentration and simultaneous forward movement of all available forces in a common attack. The ambitions of leaders were immaterial and like local interests and particular "isms" should and must give way to the imperative demands of the situation. Greeley had urged Republicans to support Douglas after he broke with the Administration over the Lecompton Constitution. He opposed the candidacy of Lincoln against Douglas for the Senate, and during the debates maintained a stubborn editorial silence. Immediately upon their conclusion he reiterated his belief that wisdom favored his original suggestion, lodging some sharp criticisms against Lincoln's tactics in the canvass.<sup>1</sup> Thereafter, at short intervals he renewed his contention that a coalition was imperative, insisting that common sense and

<sup>1</sup>*N. Y. Tribune* (w.), Nov. 27, 1858.

prudence enjoined it.<sup>1</sup> In a long editorial entitled "The Presidency in 1860," (April 26) he restated the grounds for his position. "We do not deem it necessary again to contradict the rumors from time to time set afloat that we are laboring to nominate and elect A, B or C. The single end we keep in mind is the triumph of our principles . . . . In the last Presidential contest the votes of the American people were divided as follows:

Buchanan, 1,838,232; Fremont, 1,341,514; Fillmore, 874,707; Fremont and Fillmore over Buchanan, 377,989.

"Of course it is plain that a substantial, practical union of the electors who supported Fremont and Fillmore respectively insures a triumph in 1860, even though there should be a scaling off on either side, as there possibly would be. We can afford to lose one hundred thousand of the Opposition vote in 1856 and still carry the next President by a handsome majority." After pointing out that there was no essential variance among the Whigs and the native Americans respecting Slavery he says concerning candidates: "Most certainly we should prefer an original Republican—Governor Seward or Governor Chase—but we shall heartily and zealously support one like John Bell, Edward Bates, or John M. Botts, provided that we are assured that his influence, his patronage, his power, if chosen President will be used not to extend Slavery but to confine it to the States that see fit to uphold it." The editorial closes with the words: "When speech tends to irritate and distract, unspeakable is the wisdom of silence."

This was the language of common sense, the language of men who canvass their experiences and are governed by the lessons which they enjoin and enforce. But sensible though the editorial was, its suggestions drew forth sharp rejoinders. The assertion that *The Tribune* would heartily support Bell, Bates or Botts at once aroused the Germans of Iowa and

<sup>1</sup>See *Ib.* (s. w.), "Union of the Opposition," Dec. 10, 1858; "The Opposition in 1860," Jan. 4, 1860; "The Presidency," Jan. 18. In the latter the charge that *The Tribune* is opposing Seward is denied.

The assumption above (and subsequently) that Horace Greeley penned the editorials defining the attitude of *The Tribune* towards the Republican Presidential nomination may be subject to question, as Charles A. Dana was Greeley's *alter ego* and frequently had entire charge of that paper. Nevertheless there seems to be grounds for thinking that Greeley probably struck the dominant notes and gave direction to the editorial policy. Dana, however, concurred and heartily supported his chief. See Gen. Jas. H. Wilson's *Life of Charles A. Dana*, pp. 161-2.



thence of the entire country. All three men were considered to be tainted with Know-Nothingism by reason of their public support of Fillmore in 1856 and were further deemed to be in close association with the leaders of the American party. In the furious reaction against the Massachusetts Amendment that ensued in the next three months the Democrats and Germans alike cited the editorial as proof of their contention that the Republicans had natural affiliations and a virtual alliance with the anti-foreign propagandists.<sup>1</sup> Greeley's insistence upon a coalition of the entire Opposition on the basis of non-extension of Slavery elicited some slashing criticisms.

On the same day Greeley's editorial appeared, Mr. Dunham gave expression to sentiment directly in conflict with the major suggestion of *The Tribune*. On April 22, *The Press and Tribune* of Chicago had set forth what it deemed the correct position for the Republican party to take in the campaign in 1860. Commending the views of his contemporary, Mr. Dunham observed: "The views there advanced are not entirely original, being in substance those advanced by Mr. Lincoln in the late senatorial canvass, and more recently by Senator Seward in his great speech on the destiny of our country; . . ." The true basis for the Opposition, he contended, is principle and not the petty partizan considerations that masquerade under the name of "policy." But in the large there is a concurrence of principle and policy—a fact that discerning statesmen and experienced political chiefs realize and aim at in practical politics. The Republican party came into existence because it placed principles and rights before expediency and Mammon; and its strength and success in the approaching contest would so depend. "As a party of principle . . . it has attained its present high position, and shall it now abandon its positive existence, animated by strong principles, and become a negative party, held together only by the spoils, and vainly seeking to alter its course to suit every trifling circumstance. Better, always, defeat with honor, than victory with disgrace. So-called conservatives

<sup>1</sup>See writer's detailed account, *Annals of Iowa*, 3d Series, Vol. 8, pp. 206-213.

over-fearful of what is termed *sectional*, and trembling at the empty threats of southern fire-eaters, are apt even to yield what is right, forgetting that right should be supported, even though it be sectional."<sup>1</sup> Greeley's contention that the Opposition would lessen its strength, and invite defeat, by taking a radical, "sectional" stand upon Slavery that would alienate large numbers normally hostile to the principles and policies of the Administration, was not anticipated or met by Mr. Dunham.

Greeley's views, however, met immediately with direct and emphatic rejoinders. One of the most interesting and vigorous came from the pen of Thomas Drummond of Vinton, a veritable Hotspur in the journalism and politics of the period. He was a Virginian by birth and education and this fact no doubt accounts in considerable measure for the vigor and vivacity of his utterances. He took direct issue with Greeley's proposal for an alliance of the Opposition. His expressions are so typical of the sentiments of the aggressive opponents of Slavery, who were at the time staunch Republican partisans, that his editorial "Spoils or Principles in 1860" is given at considerable length:

The Republican party is not yet quite four years old . . .

Unfortunately the party is just now cursed with a lot of officious political mid-wives . . . who, when it is in perfect health and only awaits its appointed time, are throwing themselves into an agony of apprehension about its safety and insist on doctoring and prescribing for it. Their headquarters are in New York and Horace Greeley of the *New York Tribune* is their chief. It really seems to us the deliberate purpose of that paper to prevent a Republican victory if possible . . .

It is the professed aim of *The Tribune* and its co-laborers to bring about an alliance of what is termed the "entire opposition" to the Democratic party which would embrace Republicans, Know-Nothings, Southern Whigs and Douglas Democrats . . . This we hold is impossible and, if possible unwise and foolish in the extreme. Success at such a price would be barren of good results. . . .

What is the position, what are the doctrines of that body of so-called Conservatives for whose co-operation with them, such strenuous efforts are now being made by Eastern Republicans? We leave out of account the Douglas Democrats, as a miserable Falstaffian rabble, not worth looking after, and answer, they are mainly a class of men who are wedded to the past, old fogies who cling like

Crittenden and Bates to the recollections and teachings of a former age. . . .

The basis of Republicanism is its recognition and advocacy of the "inalienable rights of man" and its purpose, a steady and unceasing opposition to Slavery extension, and to the very existence of the institution itself. . . . This at least is Western Republicanism, and the party in the West is not to be sold out by its professed brethren in the East. The attempt to do so met with a signal rebuke last Fall in Illinois and will fail as signally if attempted a year hence. The nomination of Bates or Crittenden or any of their associates as candidates for the Presidency, or any emasculation of its platform will be the signal for a revolt of the genuine old Anti-Slavery element of the party, that which has been its very life blood; and its organization upon the platform of eternal antagonism to Slavery in the territories or elsewhere.

The Republican party adopts what the *New York Herald* terms "the bloody, brutal manifesto" of Abraham Lincoln, as re-echoed by Senator Seward, that there is and must be a steady conflict between Slavery and Freedom until one or the other goes to the wall—until this Union becomes all slave or all free.<sup>1</sup>

Two weeks later he expressed his satisfaction anent the fact that "the persistent efforts of certain eastern Republicans and their organs to pave the way for a coalition of all the odds and ends . . . are meeting with small favor in the great Northwest."<sup>2</sup> About the same time Mr. Frank W. Palmer expressed similar sentiments in *The Times* of Dubuque: "'Conservative' men everywhere North as well as South, may plot and plan as much as they please. There will be no half-and-half ticket in 1860. . . . If the old Whigs and Americans are ready to co-operate with Republicans . . . there may be a Union . . . but any attempt by a lot of conservative old fogies to patch up a platform in which Northern Republicans will occupy an indifferent or even a secondary position, will prove a disgraceful failure."<sup>2</sup> Mr. Charles Aldrich, on the contrary did not concur with his contemporaries in repelling the suggestion of *The Tribune* but gave it his favor; if we may so conclude from his reprinting without adverse comment the major part of Greeley's editorial urging fusion, including those portions referring to Bell, Bates and Botts.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*The Eagle*, May 10, 1859.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup>*The Hamilton Freeman*, May 14, 1859.

About the same time Mr. Teesdale gave expression to sentiments that illustrate the vague and variable distinctions that northern anti-slavery Republicans were prone to insist upon in their attitude toward southern anti-slavery sympathizers of the Clay school. Commenting upon the course of Crittenden who had but recently given public endorsement to the candidacy of Joshua F. Bell for Governor of Kentucky on the Whig ticket, he says:

Mr. Crittenden has just taken a step that effectually bars all hope of his nomination for the Presidency by a Republican convention. He has endorsed Mr. Bell, the American, or Opposition candidate for Governor of Kentucky. Mr. Bell is a pro-slavery man; and, like Goggin of Virginia, seeks to outstrip the Democratic nominee, in his professions of allegiance to slavery and the Slave Power. Deeply do we deplore this step of Mr. C. He has a host of friends in the free states who honored him for the manly stand he took in opposition to the Lecompton fraud, and in favor of the rights of Kansas. It is clear that Mr. Crittenden does not expect a position in the presidential arena; and equally clear that all attempts to secure Southern support, by ignoring the great issue before the American people, is worse than vain. "It is worse than a crime; it is a blunder," . . . If we would command respect . . . we must stand up for the political faith delivered to the fathers of the Republic. Their politics was a part of their religion, and their religion was a part of their politics. They knew no policy inconsistent with a proper recognition of the rights of man.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Teesdale's attitude in May was not exactly consistent with his position in April. He does not specify that Senator Crittenden had made himself impossible or unavailable as a candidate because of his "Americanistic" affiliations in Kentucky,—a consideration that properly would have had great weight in the North; but he contends that his endorsement of a man who did not violently oppose Slavery, but asserted its right to be where it was found, was fatal to his nomination. Crittenden's position on Slavery had not varied. He did not approve of Slavery as an ideal condition in theory or in the concrete, he did not desire to encourage its growth, and he did not promote its extension. His opposition to the Lecompton constitution demonstrated that he was "more of a patriot and less of a politician." Let Slavery alone where

<sup>1</sup>*The Weekly Citizen*, May 8, 1859.

it was,—keep it where it was,—respect the rights of the owners of slaves,—do not constantly agitate the question and disturb the peace of mind of those who possess such property, no matter how undesirable human chattels may be in abstract ethics or difficult of adjustment in practical affairs. The South should not be a subject of constant “assault.” If we except the inconsistency of the Republican denunciation of the Dred Scott decision and their valorous insistence upon the sacredness of the national constitution and the rights of Slavocrats south of the Ohio, Crittenden’s position on Slavery squared with the views of nine Republicans out of ten in the North.<sup>1</sup>

The second quarter of the year closed with an expression from Mr. Howell in *The Gate City* respecting the candidacy of Simon Cameron that voiced an opinion that became very common among prudent politicians of much discernment and experience. Noting the fact that “Lately the Republican press of Pennsylvania has been rapidly coalescing upon him,” he says, “With no disposition to recommend candidates at this early period, we may say, however, that Pennsylvania and Illinois will be the battle-ground of the next campaign. There *are* men for whom those two States can be carried. But they are very few. These two plain facts will go very far and should go very far towards limiting the range of speculation concerning candidates.”<sup>2</sup> Victory perches on the standards of those who command effective forces at the crucial points—and such were the doubtful States.

<sup>1</sup>Coleman’s *Life of John J. Crittenden*, Vol. II, p. 154, et seq.—passion.

<sup>2</sup>*The Gate City*, June 28, 1859.

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